

The facility is currently operating between a level of service (LOS) range of B to C. Continued traffic growth at the current rate without any facility improvements would result in the LOS being as high as “D”. (Refer to Chapter 4 for a detailed explanation of LOS).

- Safety Issues: Between the years of 2000 and 2005, the seven highest accident intersections within the planning area occurred along NC 24. Improving NC 24 to expressway standards may potentially include the reduction of traffic signals and driveways, the removal of the center turning lane, or the construction of super street intersections. These improvements will ease congestion and reduce the potential for crashes.
- Social Demands and Economic Development: The NC 24 corridor serves as the hub for economic development for the Town. Ninety-five percent of all the Town’s commercial development is located along this corridor. It is anticipated that the proposed enhancements will promote new economic growth for the town. As development occurs along NC 24 it is important that alternative forms of access is planned to allow for greater capacity along this Strategic Highway Corridor.

As a SHC, it has been determined that NC 24 contributes toward statewide mobility and connectivity, promotes a vision of modern transportation, and is supportive of economic opportunities and environmental excellence. Economic development is fostered by the usage of NC 24 as a truck route for many port operations.

- System Linkage: The primary purpose of North Carolina Strategic Highway Corridors is to provide a network of high-speed, safe, reliable highways throughout the State. As a SHC, the eastern portion of NC 24 provides connectivity between three major state activity centers and four other strategic corridors. {Fayetteville (I-95), I-40, Jacksonville (US 17), and the Port of Morehead City (US 70)}.

This segment of NC 24 is also identified as a hurricane evacuation and a Strategic Highway-Corridor Network (STRAHNET) route. Further, it is a designated route on the North Carolina Intrastate System and the National Highway System.

- Modal Interrelationships: Portions of NC 24 in the planning area is designated as part of the Jacksonville to the Sea Bicycle Route and the Swansboro Bicentennial Bicycle Route. Due to these designations, bicycle traffic can be expected along NC 24. The recommended improvements to NC 24 will improve safety for bicyclist by decreasing vehicle congestion and constructing a median to reduce traffic conflicts. Coordination with the NCDOT Division of Bicycle and Pedestrian Transportation is recommended prior to the implementation of any improvements.
- Relationship to Other Plans: The recommendations made for NC 24 are consistent with the North Carolina Strategic Corridor Plan that also designates this segment of